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Forest  
Service

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# Environmental Assessment

## Administrative Site Reconstruction

**Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District  
Lake County, Michigan**

T17N, R13W, Sec 3

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## SUMMARY

The Huron-Manistee National Forest proposes to reconstruct the Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District administrative facility. The project includes restoration of four existing warehouse buildings; removal and replacement of the existing office building; removal of three residence buildings; construction of one warehouse, a crew bunkhouse, and associated parking lots, driveways and site landscaping. The Project Area is located in Lake County, Michigan, T17N, R13W, Section 3, and is within the Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District, Huron-Manistee National Forests, Michigan. This action is needed to address long standing administrative site modifications required to correct health and safety issues, to improve customer services, and improve operational efficiencies by reducing energy use. The existing CCC (era 1936) buildings are long past their constructed life expectancy and do not meet current requirements for access and energy efficiency.

The proposed action may result in some short term disruption and inconvenience to agency staff while demolition and construction work takes place. It will also result in disruption and inconvenience for customers seeking services at the Baldwin/White Cloud Office.

In addition to the proposed action, the Forest Service also evaluated the following alternatives:

- *No Action Alternative. Under this alternative, the existing 1936 era buildings would remain and be maintained to the maximum extent possible. Staff would continue to occupy the existing office space.*

Based upon the effects of the alternatives, the responsible official will decide whether or not to proceed with development of new facilities at the current Baldwin, Michigan, Forest Service administrative site.

# INTRODUCTION

## Document Structure

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The Forest Service has prepared this Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations. This Environmental Assessment discloses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts that would result from the proposed action and alternatives. The document is organized into four parts:

- *Introduction:* This section includes information on the history of the project proposal, the purpose of and need for the project, and the agency's proposal for achieving that purpose and need. This section also details how the Forest Service informed the public of the proposal and how the public responded.
- *Comparison of Alternatives, Including the Proposed Action:* This section provides a more detailed description of the agency's proposed action as well as alternative methods for achieving the stated purpose. These alternatives were developed based on significant issues raised by the public and other agencies. This discussion also includes possible mitigation measures. Finally, this section provides a summary table of the environmental consequences associated with each alternative.
- *Environmental Consequences:* This section describes the environmental effects of implementing the proposed action and other alternatives. This analysis is organized by resource area, significant issues, and environmental components. Within each section, the affected environment is described first, followed by the effects of the No Action Alternative that provides a baseline for evaluation and comparison of the other alternatives that follow.
- *Agencies and Persons Consulted:* This section provides a list of preparers and agencies consulted during the development of the environmental assessment.
- *Appendices:* The appendices provide more detailed information to support the analyses presented in the environmental assessment.

Additional documentation, including more detailed analyses of project-area resources, may be found in the project planning record located at the Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District Office in Baldwin, Michigan.

## Background

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The Baldwin and White Cloud Ranger Districts are located in the southern half of the Manistee National Forest. Prior to 1992 they were independent administrative units, managed from separate offices in White Cloud and Baldwin. In an effort to reduce increasing administrative costs, these two units were combined under one District Ranger in 1992. This was followed by collocating all district staff at the Baldwin Ranger Station in 1997.

To accommodate the combined staff, two existing housing units and a garage on the Baldwin compound were converted to office space. It was clear the modifications were only a temporary solution and, at some point in the future, updated facilities would be required. The 1936 era buildings are not designed to meet the current code standards for accessibility, energy efficiency, nor are they sufficient to house modern day equipment such as fire engines.

The current Huron-Manistee National Forests Facility Master Plan has identified the Baldwin administrative site as a location to be retained and redeveloped for continued use as a Ranger District office. In FY 2009, the Eastern Region of the Forest Service placed the project in the funded category for capital investment funds in 2010 thru 2013. A review of alternative locations for the Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District office confirmed that the current Baldwin location best meets the needs of the unit, as well as, the community of Baldwin, Michigan.

## Purpose and Need for Action

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The Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District Administrative site occupies two city blocks within the Village of Baldwin, Michigan. Buildings on this site were constructed in 1936 with the exception of one residential structure built in the early 1970's. At the present time the site contains one 4817 square foot, two story office building; two residential housing units which have been converted to 3579 square foot of employee office space; one residential housing unit currently used as crew quarters for up to seven seasonal crew personnel; four warehouse buildings used for equipment and vehicle storage; and three garage and/or shed buildings used for small equipment storage. All of the buildings on this site have exceeded their planned design life by many years and are not suitable for continued use as employee work space. The proposed project would address the following facility limitations:

- Costs of maintaining four separate buildings as office space is high. Service costs include maintaining multiple heating and cooling systems, more complicated utility system repairs and complex cleaning services.
- Employee office space is insufficient and does not comply with several key building code standards, including accessibility requirements under the Architectural Barriers Act.
- Space for public and employee parking is not sufficient, especially during the summer.
- The current facility provides limited space for visitor contacts and interpretive/educational displays. This results in a poor environment for public interaction and creates a negative impression for office visitors
- Lack of conferencing and training facilities.
- Existing seasonal employee and volunteer housing does not meet current code standards for employee housing.
- Current available space will not meet the anticipated staff changes in all disciplines expected over the next 50 year, the life expectancy of the facility.
- Current storage and warehouse facilities will not meet planned needs for upgrades to fire equipment and rolling stock.

This action responds to the goals and objectives recommended in the Huron-Manistee National Forests' Facility Master Plan, approved by Kent Connaughton, Regional Forester for the Eastern Region, on 11/20/2008. The desired future condition for the Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District administrative site is described as: *"new administrative facilities are necessary. Some facilities may be retained, decommissioned, altered in use or acquired."* Specific actions recommended in this document include: Decommissioning the main office building, the fire office building, the converted house and garage office space, and the bunkhouse with garage; retaining all four existing warehouse buildings as well as the oil shed

and equipment shed; and acquiring a new office building, fire warehouse and garage, fire office, new garage/warehouse, and crew quarters.

## Proposed Action

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The Forest Service would replace and/or restore all buildings on the Baldwin administrative site. This work would include removal of all existing buildings on the west block between Cedar Street and Michigan Avenue. A new two story, 12,862 square foot, office building would be constructed on the reclaimed area. Attached to this building would be a 6,480 square foot, six bay garage for storage of fire engines and fire equipment. On the east block between Cedar Street and Norway Street the three existing 2,271 square foot and one 3248 square foot warehouse buildings would be refurbished and updated with new electrical, heating, insulation and plumbing. In addition a new 2271 square foot, five stall garage/warehouse would be constructed along with a 2,450 square foot bunkhouse for 12 seasonal employees. The overall plan for the site is to accommodate all permanent and temporary district employees (approximately 45 employees at the peak of field season) within one office building. The office building would include a 600 square foot reception area with public display space and public restrooms, a large conference room that would be available for community use, and associated utility rooms. Also included would be additional restrooms with showers for employees, a computer room, two small conference rooms, and a kitchen/break room.

Included in the site design would be a redesign of the parking areas to accommodate 67 employee and public parking spaces, driveways and storm water drainage for the facility. Cedar Street between Lake Street and Sixth Street has been abandoned by the Village and would be closed to through traffic. The main access route into the administrative site would be from Lake Street at the intersection of Lake Street and Cedar Street.

All facilities developed on site would fully comply with accessibility and current building codes.

## Decision Framework

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The Forest Supervisor is the Responsible Official. The decision to be made is to determine if the Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger District administrative site should be reconstructed at this time. Included in this decision will be the facility construction management requirements, mitigation measures, and community and other natural resource coordination requirements.

## Public Involvement

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The proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during scoping initiated on April 15, 2010 and ending on May 15, 2010. In addition, as part of the public involvement process, the agency began working with the Village of Baldwin's Zoning Department on March 3, 2010 on review of a conceptual site plan. A conceptual site plan was approved by the Baldwin Planning Commission on April 26, 2010.

During the scoping process for this project the Forest received no comments from the general public.

## Issues

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The Forest received no comments from the public or government agencies during the scoping period related to this project.

The Forest has been working with the Village of Baldwin, through their planning and zoning departments and Village Council, on identifying any issues or concerns related to the proposed action. Their primary concerns with the project related to a desire to follow local zoning and building regulations. There were also concerns with how site construction and future operations of the administrative facility would impact residents living along Sixth and Norway Streets.

There were a number of issues identified by the Village of Baldwin Planning and Zoning Departments. Most are found in their letter of March 29, 2010 and are outlined as follows:

1. New buildings must meet setback requirements in the Village zoning code.
2. If existing easements to the Village are to be abandoned for site development, this process should be done prior to any construction.
3. Required parking based on total buildings and employees must be developed on site.
4. Utilities should be located below ground. The sewer located in Cedar Street will revert to Forest Service maintenance.
5. Water runoff from the administrative site must be contained on site and not directed into the Village storm water system.
6. Screening will be required around the storage yard to address view issues with local neighbors along Sixth and Norway Streets.
7. Public sidewalks and lighting along Michigan Avenue and Lake Streets will conform to the downtown Baldwin Streetscape plan.

All of the items listed above will be addressed through site design and have been noted in the administrative site plan, approved by the Village of Baldwin at their May, 2010 meeting.

Several items recommended by the Village Zoning Department were not included in the proposed action.

They include:

1. The Zoning Department recommended that the Forest Service combine our two city blocks within the Village into one parcel. The Forest did not move forward with that recommendation.
2. The Zoning Department recommended that the Forest Service obtain a financial surety bond to guarantee the construction of the required improvements. The Forest Service cannot provide a financial project guarantee. This concern arose over the fear the project would begin and funding would run out before it was completed, leaving an eyesore or hazard within the Village limits. The project will not begin until complete funding for each phase is available.



## ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

This chapter describes and compares the No Action and Proposed Action alternative considered for the administrative site redevelopment project. It includes a description and map of each alternative. This section also presents the alternatives in comparative form, sharply defining the differences between each alternative and providing a clear basis for choice among options by the decision maker. Some of the information used to compare the alternatives is based upon the design of the alternative and some of the information is based upon the environmental, social, and economic effects of implementing an alternative.

### Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Study

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Three alternatives were considered but eliminated from detailed study. They were partially analyzed, and found to be outside the purpose and need for action. Alternatives eliminated from detailed study are summarized below and include the rationale for eliminating each of them from further study.

1. Locate the administrative site at the NE1/4, SE1/4, Sec 22, of Webber Township, Lake County. The common site name for this area is Government Lake, and is located approximately two miles north of the current Baldwin Ranger Station, along M-37, and outside the Village limits. There are some utility services located along the east property boundary. The site was eliminated due to the issues of development creep and the loss of direct community economic support of the Village of Baldwin by having the Forest Service located within the Village limits. Moving from a full service community to an area with less service access would increase the District's operating cost. Services such as gas stations, hardware and post office would all require additional travel time for access.
2. Locate the administrative site at the SE1/4, SE1/4, Section 34, of Pleasant Plains Township, Lake County. The common site name for this area is County Line, and is located approximately 6 miles south of the current Baldwin Ranger Station, along M-37, and outside the Village limits. There are no utility services at this location and would require development of onsite water and sewer. This site was eliminated due to the issue of development creep, the cost of developing onsite services, and the loss of direct community economic support of the Village of Baldwin by having the Forest Services located within the Village limits. Moving from a full service community to an area with less service access would also increase the District's operating cost. Services such as gas stations, hardware and post office would all require additional travel time for access.
3. Locate the administrative site at the NE1/4 of section 12, Merrill Township, Newaygo County. The common site name for this area is Shelly Lake and is located approximately 13 miles south of the current Baldwin Ranger Station, along M-37, and outside the Village limits. There are no utility services at this location and would require development of onsite water and sewer. This site was eliminated due to the issue of development creep the cost of developing onsite services, and the loss of direct community economic support of the Village of

Baldwin by having the Forest Services located within the Village limits. Also the loss of economic support to Lake County that would result from moving to Newaygo County. In addition, moving from a full service community to an area with less service access would increase the District's operating cost. Services such as gas stations, hardware and post office would all require additional travel time for access.

## Alternatives

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### Alternative 1

#### **No Action**

Under the No Action alternative, the Baldwin/White Cloud administrative site would not be reconstructed. The existing buildings constructed in 1936 would continue to be used even though buildings are not up to the current building code standards. The buildings would continue to provide barriers to access for persons with disabilities.

Employees would continue to use the existing main office building and two residential buildings as office space (8,396 square feet). The visitor information area of the office would remain at 127 square feet. No conference room would be provided.

The existing four warehouse buildings (10,061 square feet) would continue to be maintained as they are.

The remaining residential building would continue to operate as crew quarters for seven temporary employees in the current configuration.

Onsite parking is limited to 34 parking spaces for employees and general public. Overflow parking would continue to use the village parking lot north of Lake Street.

See the current site layout for the Baldwin/White Cloud Administrative site in Appendix A.

### Alternative 2

#### **The Proposed Action**

The Forest Service would replace and/or restore all the buildings on the Baldwin administrative site.

This work would include removal of all existing buildings on the west block between Cedar Street and Michigan Avenue. (the office building, the two houses used as additional office space and the bunk house and two garages).

A new two story, 12,862 square feet, office building would be constructed on the reclaimed area. Attached to this building would be a 6,480 square foot, six bay garage for storage of fire engines and fire equipment.

On the east block between Cedar Street and Norway Street the four existing warehouse buildings (10,061 square feet total) would be refurbished and updated with new electrical, heating, insulation and plumbing. In addition a new 2,271 square feet, five stall garage/warehouse would be constructed along with a bunkhouse for 12 seasonal employees.

The overall plan for the site is to accommodate all permanent and temporary district employees (approximately 45 employees at the peak of field season) within one office building. The office building would include a 600 square foot reception area with public display space and public restrooms. The office space would include large conference room that would be available for community use. Also included would be additional restrooms with showers for employees, a computer room, two small conference rooms, and a kitchen/break room.

Included in the site design would be a redesign of the parking areas, driveways and storm water drainage for the facility. Cedar Street between Lake Street and Sixth Street has been abandoned by the Village and would be closed to through traffic. The main access route into the administrative site would be from Lake Street at the intersection of Lake Street and Cedar Street.

All facilities developed on site would fully comply with accessibility and current building codes.

See the proposed new facility layout in Appendix A.

## **Mitigation Measures for the Proposed Action \_\_\_\_\_**

In the event historic or prehistoric items are discovered during construction actions to protect these finds would be taken.

Leafy spurge and Tartarian honeysuckle would be removed during the site preparation for the reconstruction project. Because Tartarian honeysuckle line the streets surrounding and close to the Baldwin complex, it is likely that periodic removal will need to occur as new seedlings sprout in un-mowed landscaped areas of the new complex. Follow up treatments of leafy spurge will also be likely because the plant is stimulated by soil disturbance

Leafy spurge is highly stimulated by soil disturbance in the rooting zone. Any equipment which is used for any soil disturbance during construction will need to be cleaned before leaving the wooded construction area to avoid spreading leafy spurge to new sites.

Monitoring for Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), will take place during and post construction to ensure it does not establish in the site.

## Comparison of Alternatives

This section provides a summary of the effects of implementing each alternative. Information in the table is focused on activities and effects where different levels of effects or outputs can be distinguished quantitatively or qualitatively among alternatives.

**Table I Comparison of Alternatives.**

	<b>Alternative 1 No Action</b>	<b>Alternative 2 Proposed Action</b>
Urban Sprawl	No Effect	No Effect
Heritage Resources	No Effect	No effect Buildings are not eligible for National Register of Historic Places
Civil Rights	No Effect	No Effect
Transportation and parking	Continue travel through the local neighborhood. Parking during high staffing periods will continue to use public parking areas in Village	Fire vehicle traffic will be routed down 6 <sup>th</sup> street. Employee parking will be contained on site. Cedar Street will revert to FS ownership.
Economics	FS admin site will continue to be a visible presence in the community of Baldwin.	FS admin site will continue to be a visible presence in the community of Baldwin.
Admin Facility	No change	1930 era buildings would be replaced with modern, up-to-date facilities which meet current code requirements
Noxious Weeds	No change	Tartarian Honeysuckle, Leafy Spurge will be removed from site.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

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This section summarizes the physical, biological, social and economic environments of the affected project area and the potential changes to those environments due to implementation of the alternatives. It also presents the scientific and analytical basis for comparison of alternatives presented in the chart above.

For the purpose of this analysis, the affected environment is limited to the two city blocks in the Village of Baldwin currently occupied by the Baldwin Ranger Station. This area is bordered by Lake Street on the north, Norway Street on the east, Sixth Street on the south and Michigan Avenue (M-37) on the west. The total area for this site is 6+/- acres. The site has been continually occupied by the US Forest Service as an administrative site since 1936.

### Physical Environment

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Buildings on this site include four warehouses; 3 houses and two garages currently being used as offices and seasonal housing or bunk houses; one administrative office building; and open outside storage. All structures are 1936 vintage buildings built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), with the exception of the "Brown House", aka the Firehouse, which was constructed by the Job Corps in the early 1970's. All of the buildings have a worn appearance and are in need of heavy maintenance.

The site is well landscaped with mature hardwoods and softwood trees, as well as ornamental shrubs. Some of these ornamental shrubs, including Tartarin honeysuckle, are not native to this area and are considered invasive. The site also has other invasive plants including Leafy Spurge and Japanese Knotweed.

The eastern side of the east city block has thick row planted pine with some large scattered oak. These trees provide a visual screen to the site when looking from Norway Street.

Employee and visitor parking is scattered throughout the administrative site and during periods of high staff levels, April thru September, does not meet total parking needs. This results in employees parking in offsite Village parking lots.

None of the buildings meet current accessibility standards. They also do not meet code requirements for employee housing use, energy standards, or economical maintenance standards.

Soil testing to determine stability for construction was conducted in 2010. The site is overlaid with a thick sand substrate. Tests indicated construction could take place using standard construction techniques.

There are no wetlands identified on this site. There is however a high water table in the area which would require any basement construction to incorporate a sump system. Storm runoff is currently collected in retention areas located on site or along the Village streets. Future development will require planning for additional on-site water retention.

Mitigation of hazardous site contamination has taken place several times during the past 20 years to correct identified problem areas. The first action took place in 1986 to remove underground fuel storage tanks. All contaminated soil was removed during that effort and a clean report received.

A second study and mitigation project was done in 1998 to identify and remove lead contaminated soils from around the warehouses. Lead paint from past maintenance work was detected in the soil and had to be removed. The soil removal work was completed and the area was determined to be lead free. At the same time a drywell attached to the machine shop was discovered and determined to contain oil and solvent contamination. The area around the drywell showed signs of contamination. The drywell was removed and the contaminated soil was also removed. Test wells were placed down stream of the site to monitor any possible contamination of the water table. The most recent reports of the site indicate no contamination of the ground water.

There is a gasoline plume originating from the BP Gas Station across Michigan Avenue from the Baldwin administration site. Monitoring wells are located in the highway right-of-way as well as on the northwest corner of the Forest Service property along Michigan Avenue. Mitigation work on this spill is being conducted by gas station owners and monitored by the State of Michigan.

## **Direct and Indirect Effects**

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### **Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative**

There would be no change to the existing Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger Station. Routine maintenance such as, cutting grass, minor building repair, and tree management, would continue. The facility would continue to fail code requirements for accessibility, standard office design and environmental energy standards. During some periods of the year on-site employee parking needs would not be met. Soils would not be an issue. Storm water retention would continue with no change to the current design. There would be no hazmat issues.

### **Alternative 2 - Proposed Action**

Under the proposed action, facilities at Baldwin/White Cloud Ranger Station would undergo a complete site redesign. The buildings located on the west city block between Cedar Street and Michigan Avenue would be removed and replaced with a new two-story office structure with attached garage to house fire equipment. On-site employee parking would be developed on the northeast section of the block with access to Lake Street. Visitor access and parking would be developed through the west side of the block with pass through access from Sixth Street and Lake Street.

The four existing warehouse buildings located on the east city block between Cedar Street and Norway Street would receive a complete makeover. This would include replacement of the outside siding, electrical upgrades, and improved storage designs. In addition, one new warehouse would be constructed.

A new bunkhouse capable of housing 12 seasonal employees would be constructed facing Norway Street.

Other site upgrades would include improved storage yard designs with screening to protect neighborhood views. Access controls and upgraded lighting would improve security of the facility. Improved public access would facilitate expanded visitor services. Upgrades to the water retention system would be developed to meet increased demand from expanded parking and buildings.

Any hazmat material within the buildings to be removed will be properly disposed of.

## Cumulative Effects

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### Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative

The site would continue to operate as is. There would be no upgrades or replacement of the existing structures. The facilities would not meet any of the required code or access requirements. Maintenance and operation costs would continue to increase as the District worked to keep the facilities usable. At some point most of the office and bunkhouse structures would become unserviceable requiring relocation to more appropriate facilities.

### Alternative 2 - Proposed Action

The site would continue to be used as an administrative site. The new facilities would meet projected District operations for the next 50 years. There would be an initial increase in operation costs as a result of the expanded facilities. These should decrease over time as a result of the improved, more efficient building designs, high efficiency heating and lighting along with consolidation of all staff functions into one building. The facility would also serve as a community asset in the form of available meeting space, visitor information services and a high quality community public presence.

## Biological Environment

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### Endangered, Threatened, and Regional Forester Sensitive Species

No federally endangered or threatened species, designated critical habitat for federally listed species, or Regional Forester's Sensitive Species have been documented to occur within the Project Area.

- 1) There is no documented use by Karner blue butterflies (KBB), nor suitable habitat at the Baldwin administrative site (Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI)).
- 2) The Project Area is outside the Tippy Management Zone (swarming habitat) for the Indiana bat and would not impact swarming habitat (Biological Opinion (BO) dated June 12, 2003).
- 3) The Project Area is outside the potential breeding range of the Indiana bat (BO).
- 4) No effects are expected upon species on the Regional Forester's Sensitive Species (RFSS) Animal list.
- 5) No effects are expected upon species on the RFSS Plant list.

### Non-Native Invasive Plants (NNIS)

One non-native invasive plant, Tartarian honeysuckle, (*Lonicera tartarica*) is prevalent throughout the Village of Baldwin, and surrounds the District property. There are several Tartarian honeysuckles on the District property, however, most were removed as part of the Forest Service direction to remove NNIS from administrative sites. The remaining honeysuckles need to be removed during the reconstruction of the office complex to meet Forest-wide NNIS objectives. Since honeysuckles line the streets surrounding and close to the Baldwin complex, it is likely that periodic removal of honeysuckle will need to occur as new seedlings sprout in un-mowed landscaped areas of the new complex.



A second NNIS species, leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) also occurs in the wooded area in the warehouse block. It has been treated for the past three years and has not spread in population; however, it has yet to be extirpated from the site. A different herbicide is being applied this year, that appears to have improved kill for the species, and it is anticipated that the population on the District complex will be reduced in size and vigor in 2011. It is likely that any soil disturbance and/or tree removal in the wooded area will result in an increase in population size of the leafy spurge.

A third NNIS species, Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*, formerly *Polygonum cuspidatum*) is found on private property on the south side of the District complex. It is not expected to affect the District property as it spreads vegetatively and is not known to have fertile flowers or seeds (Seiger 1991).

No other NNIS species are expected to be impacted by construction activities associated with District complex construction.

## **Direct and Indirect Effects**

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### **Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative**

No effects are expected upon threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant or animal species. Actions to remove NNIS would not be precluded by the selection of the No Action Alternative.

### **Alternative 2 - Proposed Action**

No effects are expected upon threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant or animal species. The proposed action should not increase NNIS species on the administrative site.

## **Cumulative Effects**

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### **Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative**

No effects are expected upon threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant or animal species. Actions to remove NNIS would not be precluded by the selection of the No Action Alternative.

### **Alternative 2 - Proposed Action**

No effects are expected upon threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant or animal species. The proposed action should not increase NNIS species on the administrative site.

## **Social Environment**

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The office site reconstruction is expected to take approximately two years. During that time there will be noise generated by heavy equipment. There will also be additional truck traffic.

### **Heritage Resources**



The area of analysis is the 6.4 acres of the current Baldwin Ranger Station, located in Baldwin, Michigan.

The Forest Service identified the possibility that the Baldwin Ranger Station was a significant historic site. A review of the records indicated that the Secretary of the Interior determined in 1984 that the Baldwin Ranger Station was not of significance as required by the National Register's criteria for evaluation for properties that have achieved significance within the last 50 years. Based on this 9/28/1984 determination the Baldwin Ranger station is not eligible for inclusion into the National Register of Historic Places for properties that have achieved significance within the last 50 years. No further historic review or documentation is required. Field surveys of the Baldwin site discovered no prehistoric cultural resources.

## **Direct and Indirect Effects**

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### **Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative**

There would be no effect to Heritage Resources under the No Action Alternative. There would be no changes to the current occupation and use of the site.

### **Alternative 2 - Proposed Action**

There would be no effect to Heritage Resources from the proposed action since the buildings were determined to be "not eligible" for the National Historic Register and no prehistoric material was found.

## **Cumulative Effects**

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When considered with all past, present, and foreseeable future activities, there would no effects to Heritage Resources from the No Action Alternative or the Proposed Action.

## **Economics**

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The area of analysis is the current 6.4 acre Baldwin administrative site and the community of Baldwin.

## **Direct and Indirect Effects**

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### **Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative**

There would be no change to the existing facilities. As a result, maintenance and operations costs would continue to increase due to the high cost of repair and replacement of worn out building materials and operating systems. As the older systems are operated, there is a greater risk of catastrophic failure and the resulting loss of government assets. No new construction costs are proposed.

### **Alternative 2 - Proposed Action**

The full build-out of the proposed action is approximately \$5.5 million for an office building and fire station, new warehouse, retrofit of four existing warehouses, new bunkhouse, and landscaping/driveway and parking upgrades. There could be additional monthly

maintenance costs for electricity and gas because of increased office space, however, this could be offset by the increased efficiencies achieved through improved building design, insulation, upgraded heating, electrical upgrades and other LEED principals. There would be a short-term indirect affect to the local economy from construction workers and contractors buying some goods and services locally.

## **Cumulative Effects**

When considered with all past, present and foreseeable future activities, there would be no change to the cumulative effect from the No Action Alternative. The Proposed Action would add short term positive economic benefits to the community through construction workers and contractors purchasing some supplies while working on the project. There would be additional annual maintenance costs with the larger administrative facilities; however, repairs are likely to be reduced with new energy-efficient equipment as well as long term savings in operation costs.

## **Civil Rights Impact Analysis and Environmental Justice**

### **Effects Common to the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action**

Neither the Proposed Action nor the No Action alternative is expected to affect the civil rights of any members of the public near the project, employees or other individuals. No comments were received through the scoping efforts and personal contacts. The office location will continue to occupy the same site it has occupied for the past 74 years. The contract for construction would be awarded in accordance with United States Department of Agriculture regulations. There would be no discrimination based on race, religion, sex, age, disabilities or family status.

According to the 2000 US Census the population of Baldwin, Michigan is 1,107 people, 397 households, and 183 families within the Village. The population density is 873.2 per square mile. There are 479 housing units at an average density of 377.8/sq mi. The racial makeup of the Village is 59.62% White, 34.33% African American, 1.36% Native American, 0.45% from other races, and 4.25% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race was 2.71% of the population.

The median income for a household in the Village is \$15,550, and the median income for a family is \$22,857. About 32.0% of families and 35.9% of the population are below the poverty line. These demographics would indicate that Baldwin does qualify as an Environmental Justice Community. This project however does not qualify under the definition of actions that would affect environmental justice and, therefore, the proposed action and the no action alternative would not affect environmental justice.

## **Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources**

There would be no irreversible damage to resources from the Proposed Action or the No Action alternative. Both alternatives retain the historic use of the Baldwin Administrative

site as an office complex and do not contribute to urban sprawl that would result from development of a new location.

## **Consultation and Coordination**

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The Forest Service consulted the following individuals, Federal, State, and local agencies, tribes and non-Forest Service persons during the development of this environmental assessment:

### **ID TEAM MEMBERS:**

Leslie E. Russell, District Ranger, Baldwin/White Cloud RD

Pat McGhan, Manistee National Forest Botanist

Heather Keough, PhD. Baldwin/White Cloud Wildlife Biologist

John Davis, Huron-Manistee NF Archeologist

### **FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL AGENCIES:**

Village of Baldwin Planning and Zoning Commission

Village of Baldwin Council

## **Appendix A: Site Plans**

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